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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 04 ABU DHABI 001932

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IS, IR, IZ, YE, AE
SUBJECT: S/CT COORDINATOR CRUMPTON DISCUSSES
COUNTERTERRORISM WITH UAE FOREIGN MINISTER

REF: ABU DHABI 1930

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Classified By: AMBASSADOR MICHELE J. SISON, REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (S) Summary: During a May 7 meeting with UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed al-Nahyan (AbZ), Department of State Coordinator for Counterterrorism Henry Crumpton and Ambassador received a readout of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) leaders' 8th consultative summit, held a day earlier in Riyadh. Seized with the Iran issue, AbZ reported that the GCC agreed to send an Omani delegation to Iran to highlight GCC worries over Iran's nuclear program. GCC leaders also discussed Iranian support for terrorism and Hizballah, and their common concern over militant groups infiltrating across the Saudi and Kuwaiti border. AbZ opined that it was "too early" for the U.S. to engage directly with the Iranians. He was also of the view that Iran will attempt to divide the international community on its nuclear capability. AbZ reiterated to us that the UAE cannot afford to provoke Iran, despite ongoing Iranian intelligence activities that are potentially threatening to the UAE and U.S. assets in the UAE. AbZ also noted that Bahrain agreed to host an international counterterrorism center, and the GCC leaders discussed giving Yemen \$17 billion over 10 years and supporting Yemeni President Saleh's re-election at the Riyadh summit.

¶2. (S) Summary continued: AbZ and Crumpton agreed that Afghanistan needed friends and more foreign investment and confidence, and that Pakistan needed help from its friends to locate al-Qaida leadership. They also conferred on Lebanon's need for assistance from its partners to counter inroads made by Hizballah and other extremists there. AbZ reported that the UAE was committed to spending \$50 million to build three dozen police stations across Lebanon. The two sides also discussed Jordan's concerns about foreign fighters in Iraq using Jordan's borders)- a theme that could be useful for the U.S., Jordan, and the UAE to discuss together. On the Palestinian situation, AbZ made clear that the UAE was not about to support Hamas financially. End Summary.

¶3. (U) On May 7, Department of State Coordinator for

Counterterrorism Henry Crumpton and Ambassador met with UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah and MFA Under Secretary Abdullah Rashid al-Noaimi. Crumpton was accompanied by S/CT Senior Advisor Michael Hurley, and Polchief was note taker.

GCC Summit Readout: Concern About Iran, Support for Yemen

¶ 4. (C) AbZ offered a readout of the previous day's GCC leaders' 8th consultative summit in Riyadh, which he attended as part of UAE President Khalifa's delegation. The GCC leadership was very concerned about Iran, and agreed to send an Omani delegation to Iran to highlight the GCC's worries over its "peaceful" nuclear program, according to AbZ. The Omanis are expected to consult with Sultan Qaboos about the appropriate envoy who would lead the delegation, although AbZ told us he believes it will be Oman's Deputy Prime Minister Sayyid al-Said. Oman was selected for this mission because it is the only country "with no conflict with the Iranians," he added. GCC Secretary General al-Attiya will accompany the Omani delegation "to show there is clear representation of the GCC." AbZ noted that the last time a GCC delegation (Oman, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar) traveled to Iran to mediate the Iran-UAE islands dispute, "it went very badly."

¶ 5. (C) Crumpton inquired whether the delegation to Iran would address the nuclear program exclusively. AbZ admitted that there was a lot of debate among the GCC leadership on other issues, including a free trade agreement with Iran, but the consensus was "a very clear no" on the trade issue. The leaders wanted to send only one message to the Iranians. "I can't emphasize how much concern there was," AbZ told us. The GCC leaders also touched on the Iraq situation and especially the problem of Iranian influence in the region and terrorist infiltration in the region and in Iraq. There was reportedly very little discussion on the Iraqi political

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process.

¶ 6. (S) Crumpton asked AbZ to elaborate on the subject of Iranian support for terrorism and Hizballah. AbZ explained that the Hizballah issue came up in the context of Iran's role in the region. There is "a lot of worry" about militant groups infiltrating across the Saudi and Kuwaiti borders, about arms and explosives reaching Saudi radicals, and about militants coming back from Iraq "with a lot of experience," he said, referring to insurgents in Iraq. AbZ clarified that these were common concerns expressed at the summit, and were not necessarily based on solid information. Crumpton shared with AbZ his concern about "terrorism mobility" around Iraq and inquired how partners might work together on this issue. AbZ cautioned that Hizballah may be using Sunnis as well as Shi'a in their activities.

¶ 7. (S) Crumpton informed AbZ that Afghan President Karzai had told him last week that he found Iranian President Ahmedinejad "more conciliatory" than before, focusing on the importance of economic success, and not mentioning Coalition forces in Afghanistan. Crumpton noted that this was clearly a message intended for the U.S. Iranians have invested heavily in western Afghanistan. In Herat, for example, homes and businesses have electricity. Still, Crumpton said it was not clear what Ahmedinejad was trying to convey, and Ahmedinejad had not responded to overtures by Ambassador Khalilzad. "Ahmedinejad is not the one calling the shots," U/S al-Noaimi opined. Based on the UAE's past experience, al-Noaimi assessed that the Supreme Leader and Iranian intelligence are making policy. The mullahs and Ahmedinejad have different goals and they pursue "multi-track policies." AbZ interrupted, saying the Iranians "try to lead others into believing there are different tones within the Iranian leadership." Did the UAE have any recommendations for the USG, which is studying a variety of options? Crumpton asked. AbZ replied that it was "too early today for Americans to engage directly with the Iranians."

¶ 8. (S) Elaborating on the Iran Government's political tactics, AbZ noted that Iran will attempt to divide the international community on its nuclear capability. If there is international opposition to its nuclear program, Iran will find the one country that supports what it is doing and ignore the others. "Unless we get everyone in order, I believe it is close to impossible to break the Iranians," AbZ said, referring to the Russian and Chinese positions on Iran. "You have to understand that we in the region are in a tough position. We cannot be as tough as you want or need us to be, on the message or with the action," AbZ added.

¶ 9. (S) Echoing what his brother, State Security Director Sheikh Hazza, had told Crumpton in an earlier meeting about the UAE not wanting to provoke Iran (reftel), AbZ mentioned the challenges his government faces from Iranian intelligence activities in the region, a large resident Iranian community in the UAE, and a strong presence of UAE nationals of Iranian origin. "It is not that they are unpatriotic," he added, but "they have different views." Crumpton assured AbZ that the U.S. did not want to place the UAE in jeopardy. "We want complementary policies. We have interdependence in the intelligence arena; we need that with our counter-terror policies as well," he told AbZ. AbZ also discussed the role Iran was playing in the Muslim world. &"hey are filling a vacuum that has been quite empty for some time," he said. "Although Ahmedinejad's rhetoric is unacceptable to most countries, it is powerful," he conceded.

¶ 10. (S) Turning to other issues on the GCC summit agenda, the leaders also reportedly discussed how the GCC states could support Yemen and Yemeni President Saleh at the next presidential election. AbZ indicated there was concern among GCC leaders that Yemen would produce another Hamas scenario in the region. In order to prevent such a scenario, the GCC discussed holding a donors conference in London in November 2006 as well as the possibility of pledging \$17 billion over the next 10 years to help Yemen. The GCC leadership also was concerned that those funds end up in the "right hands." The

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U.S. shares that concern, Crumpton told AbZ. Crumpton noted that approximately 100 Yemenis are to be released from Guantanamo Detention Facility and transferred back to Yemen in the future, and that the U.S. would be interested in discussing prisoner treatment, rule of law, and improved prisons with the Yemeni Government. He asked for the UAEG's advice on this. "No doubt we will need U.S. support," whether financial, technical or political, AbZ replied.

Bahrain to Host International CT Center

¶ 11. (C) AbZ reported that Bahrain agreed to host an international (not regional) counterterrorism center, which Saudi King Abdullah had been promoting. "I am not sure that will happen soon," he said. "It will be a forum to exchange ideas, intelligence, and information," he surmised. The other item of business on the GCC consultative summit's agenda was a paper presented by the Kuwaiti Emir. AbZ told us that he was expecting a paper laying out possible solutions for the tension that exists between Saudi Arabia and its neighbors, including the UAE. Instead, there was "basically nothing," he said. The paper described the importance of the GCC, the fact that the region is living in difficult times, and the challenge of making good use of the wealth of the region. The paper reportedly advocated resolving regional problems by strengthening the GCC. AbZ told us that this would be "very difficult" to achieve, particularly when the Saudis were "very determined not to talk about any conflict. That (the Saudi approach) is not the way to solve issues."

Saudi CT Cooperation

¶12. (S) Crumpton inquired about AbZ's assessment of the Saudis' counterterrorism cooperation. AbZ said Saudi intelligence chief, Prince Muqrin bin Abdulaziz, was a close friend whom he has known for a long time. He is an honest person. In general, AbZ said, he had not seen "any hesitancy from the Saudis to have a good relationship on counterterrorism issues," although he characterized the Saudi structure as "complicated and slow."

Afghanistan and Pakistan

¶13. (S) Crumpton briefed AbZ on his meetings in Afghanistan and Pakistan. While the Afghans will benefit from a UAE telecommunications contract and UAE-Afghanistan airline service (Air Arabia and Emirates Airlines), they need friends as well as positive signals of investment and confidence, Crumpton said. The UAE has been a role model in the Arab world in that regard, he added. President Karzai is "desperate" to address his country's narco-terrorism problem. Crumpton also credited Pakistan with doing "more than any single country in capturing al-Qaida leadership, including Khalid Sheikh Mohammed. Crumpton noted that despite a weakened leadership and communications network, al-Qaida was still planning attacks, including in the UAE, which has a good relationship with the U.S. and is a symbol of globalization. Pakistan needs help from its friends to locate al-Qaida's leadership, who are thought to be on the Pakistan side of the Pak-Afghan border, he added.

¶14. (S) AbZ mentioned that the UAE will be making more commitments to Afghanistan, including sending an ambassador to Kabul "very soon." AbZ reported receiving "a lot of complaints from Afghanistan about Pakistan ... Karzai has to understand that there is a limit on the amount of pressure we can put on Musharraf. We have to make sure that Musharraf is there for a very long time." Crumpton agreed, saying it was "less about pressure and more about encouragement and constructive support." We should also find a way to build up support for local tribal leaders who control the Pak-Afghan border area, Crumpton added.

Lebanon and Syria

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¶15. (C) AbZ and Crumpton also discussed the need to help the Government of Lebanon and Prime Minister Siniora succeed against Hizballah and Palestinian rejectionists. AbZ noted that even some Sunnis were becoming less supportive of the Lebanese government. The UAE had also heard from Saad Hariri that some Sunni clerics in Lebanon were receiving financial support from Iran. AbZ reported that the UAE was committed to spending \$50 million to build 36 police stations in different regions of Lebanon. The UAE also plans to fund a hospital in Beirut. He noted that all these projects were "related to intelligence and security in Lebanon." He added that corruption in Lebanon made the UAE's task more difficult. Crumpton informed AbZ that he would request a U.S. assessment of the situation in Lebanon, and he would then seek the UAE's feedback. Ambassador noted that Assistant Secretary Hillen would be discussing UAE support for the Lebanese armed forces during his upcoming visit to Abu Dhabi.

Jordan's Border Worries

¶16. (S) AbZ shared some of the content of his meeting two weeks ago with Jordan's King Abdallah and Jordan's head of the intelligence. They discussed Iran, Iraq, and the Palestinian situation. King Abdallah "sounded very down," according to AbZ. King Abdallah spoke with AbZ about Syria and the problem of infiltration across its border with Iraq.

King Abdallah is thinking of redeploying his own troops from the south to the east and north to deal with infiltrators, and knows the Saudis will not like his decision. Crumpton said the Syrians were not doing anything about the porous borders. King Abdallah reportedly told AbZ that foreign fighters are going through Syria and Jordan, then to Saudi Arabia. AbZ said the UAE has been "in continuous exchange" with the Jordanians to assist them, including with counter-terror resources. Crumpton recommended a three-way discussion between the U.S., UAE, and Jordan to pursue ways to improve Jordan's security, especially its homeland security.

Israel and Palestinians

¶17. (C) Crumpton and AbZ also discussed the situation in Israel and the Palestinian territories, with AbZ stating that Israel seemed unconcerned about the consequences to themselves or Jordan of their decision to turn inward. "This is the fee you pay for democracies," AbZ said. "At the next election, you should make sure your party wins," he added, referring to Hamas' victory. Israel has tried for years to engage with the Arabs, then they had a policy of disengaging from Gaza, and the result was a Hamas win, he said.

Addressing a question about a possible collapse of Hamas, AbZ asked a question of his own. "How do we get Hamas to collapse without having all the institutions we built after Oslo collapsing as well?" AbZ recounted a meeting in his office with Mahmoud al-Zahar, foreign minister in the Palestinian Authority administration formed by Hamas.

According to AbZ, Al-Zahar told him that if Hamas wants to win, Hamas can win in Jordan and in other states as well. AbZ added that al-Zahar also thought the UAE was "going to give him a check." AbZ told al-Zahar no, but he does not know if al-Zahar got the message. "I told him that if you do not come public and support (then Saudi Crown Prince) Abdullah's initiative, you won't get anything," AbZ said, referring to the Beirut initiative. Al-Zahar reportedly told AbZ that the Saudis had not taken as harsh a position as the Emiratis. For the UAE, AbZ replied, "it's a matter of principle."

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